

Like dogs and their owners, books sometimes resemble their subjects. The sixteen self-contained essays – some of which have been previously published, like the fantastic chapter on cab drivers as proto-Thatcherites – that make up *Waterloo Sunrise* mimic London itself, their appeal lying in the accumulation and layering of detail. Patrick Abercrombie described London as a ‘city of villages’, and it is hard not to regard Davis’ book positively in similar terms. Each chapter works perfectly well by itself, but together they form an impressive whole. Its thirty-year gestation is evident; detail from a startling breadth of sources is heaped onto every page (it really does feel at points that Davis read *everything* published in local and trade presses across two decades). Despite this, it is not bloated by comprehensiveness or digression; essays are kept lean and muscular. Consequently, many things are conspicuously missing like students and their universities, while Horace Cutler is rendered almost peripheral. This is a defiantly quotidian book in which Pizza Express was more important to the average Londoner than were the Provisional IRA.

One wonders if the book’s argument would be better served by a full chapter (it is addressed partially alongside homeownership) on strains of urban Toryism – genuinely novel antecedents of Thatcherism – rather than an admittedly topical account of generational conflicts within Labour. Likewise, there are some essays one wishes were included, most significantly Davis’ 2001 article on Rachmanism, condensed into four pages at the start of chapter 5. But as I say, these are nitpicks; and it is a compliment that the only complaints are about what the book does not do. In what it *does* do, *Waterloo Sunrise* is a remarkable work whose insights are many, frequently unexpected and always rigorously researched.

Matthew Bliss 

University of Warwick

Joseph Brady, *Dublin from 1970 to 1990: The City Transformed*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2022. 456pp. 262 plates. 14 tables. Bibliography. £36.39 hbk. £26.25 pbk.

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In the late 1980s, it was said that when a UK film-crew wanted to recreate post-war bombsites, they would come to the Dublin Quays because they resembled London after the Blitz. Apocryphal or not, a visitor would have found extensive vacant lots across much of the city. The area around Parnell Street at the end of O’Connell Street felt like the end of the world. This seventh volume in the Four Courts Press series on the development of Dublin City brings the project well within the living memory of many of us. Joseph Brady ably puts the events recalled in this encyclopaedic volume into historical context. The author’s fine irony and mild cynicism about his city does not diminish his clear fondness for the place, but neither does he wander into anecdote or reminiscence: pitfalls, which he and his editor note, could occur given the relatively recent events discussed in the volume. Whilst

his study intends to focus on the 1970s and 1980s, it is inevitable that it spreads chronologically beyond these dates, with some discussion of the city's redevelopment up to the mid-1990s.

Several long-term factors about the development of Dublin are brought to light, and these are not necessarily complimentary to the Irish capital. First, there was systemic duplication, confusion and inefficiency within the local and regional planning systems: 'there has rarely been any overall plan to cope with change' (p. 117). In one place, Temple Bar, redevelopment was placed directly in the hand of *An Taoiseach* (Prime Minister). Secondly, while there was no shortage of plans during this period, actually implementing them was another thing: 'Dublin has a long history of studying its problems comprehensively, but a weaker history of implementation' (p. 222). Furthermore, for much of the twentieth century, the city had no 'coherent or consistent approach to road building' (p. 364). Thirdly, partially as an outcome of property speculation, large areas of the city were becoming derelict by the mid-1970s, by which time land prices were as low as £3/ft². Fourthly, unlike some better-financed continental cities, 'The [municipal authority] did not have resources to initiate much development' (p. 345). Finally, the lag between implementation of even quite minor innovations and construction (such as a shopping centre in Tallaght, or pedestrianizing the main shopping area, Grafton Street) often took 10 to 20 years. The proposed dedicated public transport link to the Airport is still awaited 50 years after being proposed. Brady does not spend time bemoaning these issues, instead he carefully and constructively tries to understand them, and giving praise where he sees it due.

The chapter on Dublin's environment is useful, especially in the present context of the climate emergency and increasing energy prices. It is eye-opening to read that some modern, electrically heated, homes built without chimneys, had them installed at tax-payers' expense in the late 1970s, illustrating how variable energy policy has been over the last 50 years! This reviewer remembers well the smogs of the late 1980s and how quickly they cleared once a little imagination had been applied to the situation. Brady's chapter 'The centre fights back' tells the story of the early days of the ongoing project to reimagine the city centre, in the context of changing population, suburban development and dereliction, while 'Urban decay and renewal' explains what happened to the vacant lots mentioned above, mostly, quickly (hastily?) developed as single-bed apartments often with *gauche* names – 'Viking Harbour', 'Pier 19' and so on.

The wide range of full-colour illustrations are very welcome, although due to the format of the book, some of the maps are a little hard to read. The text generally moves along briskly, and, since it does not appear to be dedicated to the specialist reader, it avoids technical jargon and is not over-referenced (although there is a comprehensive bibliography). However, certain sections are a little dogged with detail. It is not the job of this book to provide international context, but to tell the story of the Irish capital. However, this reader was left wondering what to make of the various travails of Dublin's development. Was it typical of other Irish cities in this period? Or a broader aspect of post-colonial cities elsewhere? Notwithstanding these minor criticisms, Brady has assembled an indispensable reference text on the city in this period which will be of inestimable use to scholars working on comparative studies, Irish social history, planning and social geography.

Given all of the issues raised by this book, perhaps Dubliners and visitors should be grateful that the city functions at all.

Tom Spalding 

Crawford Art Gallery, Cork

Alistair Kefford, *The Life and Death of the Shopping City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 340pp. 40 figures. Bibliography. £90.00 hbk.
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‘Britain’s town and city centres are in a state of crisis’ (p. 1). So Alastair Kefford tells us in the introduction to *The Life and Death of the Shopping City*. But if the death of the high street has been discussed in the press for the past 20 years, the cause of the problem cannot be attributed to recent political, economic and cultural shifts alone. Instead, as Kefford meticulously shows, the roots of the crisis go as far back as the 1940s, at the very birth of the post-war shopping centre. And it is here that the author stakes his claim, in a comprehensive investigation into the urban and economic policies, and, crucially, the public–private partnerships that rebuilt the British town centre.

The Life and Death of the Shopping City is loosely chronological in structure, charting the transformation of the urban centre over time. In chapters 1 and 2, we see how the urban environment was remodelled around rationalized shopping districts in the towns and cities blighted by the blitz. From the outset, large chains and retailers held sway over the Ministry of Planning, arguing for the speedy reconstruction of shopping centres before civic schemes; how better to return to *business* as usual? But it would be wrong to assume that local businesses would benefit from the prioritization of retail in the immediate post-war reconstruction. High rents and deals struck between large retailers and local authorities to construct new shopping facilities meant that local businesses were effectively ‘expelled’ from redeveloped shopping centres. This, Kefford observes, ‘was a pattern which would recur repeatedly across the subsequent decades’ (p. 63).

As redevelopment through retailing began to spread across Britain, it was no longer only the large retailers who had a say in how the urban centre could be reshaped. By the late 1950s and 1960s, local authorities began to partner with commercial developers on wholesale redevelopment schemes in the form of shopping precincts and, later, covered centres. As chapter 3 shows, this would see the sway of large retailers usurped by private developers, like Arndale, who promised to bring the glamour of the American mall to towns and cities across Britain. In turn, the shopping centres of the 1960s and 1970s paved the way for new practices of consumption. As Kefford writes, ‘These carefully curated landscapes of consumption amounted to a fundamental restructuring of not just the built environment but of urban public space, culture and experience’ (p. 5). But, in chapter 5, the author navigates these new ‘Landscapes of leisure’ on the ground, where tensions between civic versus consumer space come to the surface.